



Community climate change toolkit

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Getting started

This guide aims to help groups, whether official such as town or parish councils or unofficial, understand how they can take action to tackle climate change.

Providing ideas for collective or individual actions, signposting to resources, best practice examples and highlighting areas for consideration to tackle the emissions that cause climate change, whilst hopefully saving some money along the way!

Your group's carbon footprint

To identify and understand which behaviours and activities cause the most climate change emissions you will need to calculate your group's carbon footprint. The following tools can be used to calculate this:

- [Impact Tool, a community carbon calculator \(https://impact-tool.org.uk/\)](https://impact-tool.org.uk/) provides both emissions generated in parishes and estimates of lifestyle/consumption emissions of residents
- [Place-based carbon calculator \(https://www.carbon.place/\)](https://www.carbon.place/)
- [Carbon footprint tool \(https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx\)](https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx) for small organisations it may be better for you to use tools suited to calculating a personal carbon footprint
- [360 Carbon \(https://360carbon.org/\)](https://360carbon.org/) suitable for churches
- [Creation Care \(https://creationcare.org.uk/members/\)](https://creationcare.org.uk/members/) for congregations

Once you know your group's carbon footprint you can start by focusing on a few areas that make the most difference and that you can influence, rather than trying to tackle everything all at once.

Easy wins

Buildings

Heating and powering our buildings accounts for a huge proportion of our carbon footprint.

[Use less heating_ \(#\)](#)

Fossil fuel heating is responsible for a large proportion of emissions so heating less is a quick way to reduce emissions.

If buildings are used by various groups then user guides on how to work the heating and lighting are a quick way to ensure they are not left on unnecessarily, wasting energy.

When having annual boiler services, engineers should be asked if existing boilers and heating systems are working efficiently.

[Draught exclusion_ \(#\)](#)

An easy way to reduce heat loss is through reducing drafts. This can be as simple as using thick curtains or moveable draft excluders around doors and windows. [Get some more DIY guidance \(https://www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/diy-draught-proofing\)](https://www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/diy-draught-proofing).

[Switch off!_ \(#\)](#)

If you have communal buildings used by many, it can be hard to control behaviour but switching off appliances and lights when not in use is an easy way to save money and energy.

Use visible prompts on doors and by light switches to remind occupiers to turn things off when leaving rooms or the last out of buildings.

Energy

[Switch to a green energy tariff_ \(#\)](#)

[Check out options using an Ofgem accredited price comparison site \(https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/switching-energy-tariff-or-supplier\)](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/switching-energy-tariff-or-supplier).

[Try a collective switch \(https://www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/guides/collective-purchasing-energy-guide/\)](https://www.uswitch.com/gas-electricity/guides/collective-purchasing-energy-guide/) where you arrange for lots of residents to switch. Energy suppliers are likely to offer preferential tariff rates for this, resulting in potential cost savings.

Transport

[Travel less_ \(#\)](#)

The easiest ways to reduce emissions from transport is to try and travel less, saving money on fuel or tickets.

Ideas for travelling less, include:

- holding some group meetings or activities remotely
- promoting or organising lift-sharing among members where your activity requires travel
- as an organisation, arranging or facilitating lift-sharing in the local area, especially for local schools or workplaces
- helping arrange a 'walking bus' for the school run or similar

[Find out more on Hampshire County Council's Hants Carshare scheme](https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportoperators/community-transport-kit/access-and-transport-solutions/liftshare-car-clubs)

(<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportoperators/community-transport-kit/access-and-transport-solutions/liftshare-car-clubs>), or [find out about a national service, Liftshare](https://liftshare.com/uk) (<https://liftshare.com/uk>).

[Active transport \(#\)](#)

This refers to walking and cycling as ways to get around which have health benefits and are particularly suitable for short journeys.

- Offer secure parking for bicycles to ensure people are not put off cycling by security concerns
- Challenge local schools to improve secure bike/scooter storage to encourage active transport in the area

[Find out more on our cycling webpage \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/cycle\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/cycle) and on the [Cycling UK website. \(https://www.cyclinguk.org/\)](https://www.cyclinguk.org/)

Town and parish councils can use [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/cil)

(<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/cil>) funding to provide infrastructure such as pedestrian and cycle networks. Email CILParishes@basginstoke.gov.uk (<mailto:CEmailILParishes@basginstoke.gov.uk>) for details.

Lifestyle, consumption and waste

[Buy less! \(#\)](#)

Everything that we purchase has a carbon footprint, from aspects such as manufacture and shipping, so buying less saves us money and helps our carbon footprint.

Consider whether certain purchases are really required. Repair old items, or even buy second hand or refurbished goods.

Certain active buying decisions, such as purchasing more sustainable options, will also help. This could include local products or suppliers or those who use low or zero carbon practices.

[Educate others \(#\)](#)

Action will be far more powerful the more you're able to speak with others about what you're trying to do and why, so that they will also be motivated to take action.

Why not engage with local schools, businesses or as many other local groups as you can.

The natural environment - go pesticide free!

[Going pesticide free on any land you manage as an organisation is great for biodiversity.](#)
(<https://www.pan-uk.org/>)

We're happy to spend more time or money

Working together

[Team up and get buy-in across the community \(#\)](#)

Declare a climate emergency as an organisation. Or set up a group to tackle it together.

There are already a number of local examples throughout the borough that you can look at [Sustainable Overton](https://www.sustainableoverton.org.uk/) (<https://www.sustainableoverton.org.uk/>), [Tadley](https://www.tadleytowncouncil.gov.uk/Tadley_Environmental_Group_36921.aspx) (https://www.tadleytowncouncil.gov.uk/Tadley_Environmental_Group_36921.aspx), [Whitchurch](https://whitchurch-hampshire-tc.gov.uk/leisure-and-environment-committee/climate-emergency/) (<https://whitchurch-hampshire-tc.gov.uk/leisure-and-environment-committee/climate-emergency/>), [Sustainable Silchester](https://www.sustainable-silchester.org/) (<https://www.sustainable-silchester.org/>), [Basingstoke Transition Network](https://transitiongroups.org/group/basingstoke-transition/) (<https://transitiongroups.org/group/basingstoke-transition/>)

[Sustainable Overton has produced a hugely comprehensive toolkit based on their experience](#)
(<https://www.sustainableoverton.org.uk/so-recommends>).

Other community groups can take action and there are an increasing number of tools specific to different settings. [Churches can take part in EcoChurch](https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/) (<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/>).

You can engage with:

- local schools and teachers to build up support and enthusiasm among children, who are very effective at spreading messages to family!
- other youth groups, such as Scouts and Guides to spread the message further.

[Use existing events or initiatives \(#\)](#)

Tie activities into other local or national initiatives to gain momentum such as Clean Air Day or Earth Day.

[Find out about environmental awareness events](https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/category/environmental-awareness/) (<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/category/environmental-awareness/>)

[Green Eco Friend also has environmental awareness events on their website](https://greenecofriend.co.uk/environmental-awareness-events-on-their-website)
(<https://greenecofriend.co.uk/environmental-awareness-calendar/>)

Buildings

[Replace lighting_ \(#\)](#)

[Switching lights to LEDs](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/lighting/) (<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/lighting/>) saves energy on lighting costs and quickly pays for itself as well as saving considerable carbon.

LED alternatives can now be sourced for all sorts of light fittings, however more bespoke settings may need specialist intervention, such as floodlights. Remember to dispose of old lighting units responsibly.

[Appliances and IT \(#\)](#)

Ensure any new appliances and IT equipment purchased are energy efficient models. Appliances will have an energy label, ranked A to G, with A being the most efficient. Some appliances may use an older scale where A+++ is the most efficient.

Try to repair old appliances before replacing them to prevent waste and emissions, as new products use energy to manufacture. New 'Right to Repair' rules in the UK should make this easier and more affordable to do than it has been for some time.

[Encourage your landlord to improve your building_ \(#\)](#)

You may rent the property you use or occupy as an organisation. Landlords are bound by legal requirements to ensure their rental properties meet certain [Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards \(MEES\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-private-rented-property-minimum-energy-efficiency-standard-landlord-guidance>) to rent them out. Remind them of their responsibilities.

Energy

[Energy saving advice_ \(#\)](#)

Using less energy is a great way to save money and carbon.

Could you train up local 'Energy Champions' to provide energy-saving advice to local residents?

Transport

[Public transport_ \(#\)](#)

Using public transport is a vital way to cut emissions, and create demand for additional provision.

As a local organisation, [promote local bus routes \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/public-transport\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/public-transport) and encourage staff and volunteers to use them where possible.

Effective Neighbourhood Planning by town and parish councils can also promote sustainable transport.

Lifestyle, consumption and waste

[Diet and food \(#\)](#)

Diet can form a large portion of a carbon footprint and is an area that can be targeted for reduction very quickly.

Generally, meat, especially red meat such as beef and lamb, and dairy products have the largest carbon footprint. If you cater for any events why not consider going vegetarian for this?

Try and co-ordinate with local farmers and landowners to use or promote local produce. You could aim to link this with local shops or residents, such as through markets.

[Waste \(#\)](#)

As an organisation promote **reduce, reuse, recycle** among staff, volunteers and building-users. This could be through guidance, clear messaging or even incentives.

[Hampshire County Council's waste prevention community champions \(https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/getinvolved\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/getinvolved) help organise many activities and more, such as repair cafés, reuse shops or nappy libraries.

Consider acting as a local hub for residents, for example to collect some recyclable materials not collectable at kerbside, or for a local swap shop.

[Finance \(#\)](#)

If your group has funds to invest then choosing ethical and low carbon ways to invest is a great option. If your group is part of a wider national group then you may be able to make representations to the wider body such as via AGMs.

[Publicise the opportunities to invest more ethically to members or local residents \(https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/money-finance\)](https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/money-finance).

The natural environment

[Tree-planting \(#\)](#)

When plants and trees grow they absorb carbon and lock this up within their biomass; their roots, trunks, stems.

If you own or maintain land as an organisation, particularly a town or parish council, then you may be able to increase carbon lock up through habitat restoration or tree-planting. It's important that you get the right tree in the right place, otherwise this can be damaging for biodiversity and actually release carbon that is stored in soils. [The Woodland Trust has lots of advice on planting and maintenance and may even provide free trees \(https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/\)](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/).

[Protecting existing land and re-wilding \(#\)](#)

It's important that we look after existing green spaces, which has wider benefits, including for biodiversity and recreation. Some steps can be taken, saving effort and money, such as reduced mowing, including the increasingly popular 'No Mow May'.

[Local conservation groups \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservationgroups\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservationgroups) are doing fantastic work in this area so do get in touch if you'd like to be involved.

[Find out about additional support for conservation groups \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservation-group-support\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/conservation-group-support).

[Composting \(#\)](#)

If you own land, could you 'host' a local composting site for the community? Composting is a much better way to dispose of any garden or green waste than bonfires or burning, which not only releases carbon emissions but also creates local air pollution. [Read further guidance on bonfires \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/pollution\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/pollution)

[Low maintenance and low impact planting \(#\)](#)

You may want to consider low-maintenance vegetation on land. Not only will this reduce the need for maintenance, which will have an associated carbon footprint, but it may also be more resilient to future climate change. [The Royal Horticultural Society has a wealth of guidance on this \(https://www.rhs.org.uk/\)](https://www.rhs.org.uk/).

[Watering \(#\)](#)

Reducing your use of mains water can help you save money and reduce your carbon footprint. Collecting rain water in butts or a rain water harvesting system reduces the need for the tap or hosepipe and is better for plants due to the absence of chemicals.

We'd like to make a big difference

Neighbourhood plans

[Create a neighbourhood plan \(#\)](#)

[Neighbourhood plans \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplan\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplan) enable local town and parish councils to set parameters for new development in their areas, within the context of the borough-wide Adopted Local Plan.

Within neighbourhood plans there is an opportunity to set out policies that can aid a reduction in emissions from homes and transport and engage the local community on the development of renewable energy locally. It is possible to designate sites in the neighbourhood plan for renewables or nature restoration.

The process does take time and commitment but the council has a great track record of supporting neighbourhood plans in the borough. If you'd like to find out more then get in touch on [local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk \(mailto:local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk\)](mailto:local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk)

[Detailed guidance on creating neighbourhood plans is available from the Centre for Sustainable Energy \(https://centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf\)](https://centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf).

Buildings

[Improve insulation \(#\)](#)

If you own any buildings, such as a village hall or church then improving insulation is important as this reduces energy demand, energy bills and carbon emissions.

Simple insulation measures can include:

- draft-proofing
- loft insulation
- pipe and tank insulation
- cavity wall insulation

More costly and complex measures include:

- replacing windows and doors
- internal or external insulation for solid walls
- floor insulation

Support may be available to help with improvements, such as through the [Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme-psds\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme-psds). Cost-effective loans could be used as an option to pay for measures.

Thermal imaging can be a quick way to identify where heat is leaking from buildings. We have thermal imaging cameras available to use by town/parish councils and community groups so [get in touch with the Climate Change team \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team). You could also offer to undertake this service for residents.

Seek guidance and check permissions

If you have an old or complex building then make sure you seek specialist guidance. [Historic England provides technical guidance for energy efficiency in historic homes \(https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/).

If the building is in a conservation area or Area of Outstanding National Beauty you may need to check what work is permitted without planning permission, [check the planning portal \(https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects\)](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects) and if you're in a historic or listed building [contact Historic England \(https://historicengland.org.uk/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/).

[Find out more on our Historic Environment pages \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/building-conservation\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/building-conservation) or [get in touch with the planning team \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/planning-enquiry-form\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/planning-enquiry-form).

[Heating - replace fossil fuel systems \(#\)](#)

If you own and operate any buildings as a group then once you've improved insulation the next step is to tackle the heating.

Burning fossil fuel for heating is high in carbon. Replacing an old boiler or heating system with something more efficient will help. Ultimately you'll need to replace the system with a heat pump, or other future low carbon heat source, as electricity is becoming 'greener'. These act like a fridge working in reverse, using electricity to upgrade low incoming heat.

They come in two main varieties:

- [Air-source heat pump \(https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/air-source-heat-pumps/\)](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/air-source-heat-pumps/) (ASHP) – where the heat source is the external air
- [Ground-source heat pump \(https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/ground-source-heat-pumps/\)](https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/ground-source-heat-pumps/) (GSHP) – where heat is extracted from the ground using a horizontal array of pipes, or vertical boreholes

Find out more about heat pumps (<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/heat-pumps>)

Energy

[Generate renewable energy_ \(#\)](#)

There is a growing movement to support and facilitate 'Community Energy'. This usually involves community ownership of a renewable energy asset, such as solar panels, wind turbine or hydropower. As well as generating local, clean energy, the aim is that there is community benefit, such as reduced energy bills on a community asset and financial return for participants, which can then be reinvested to alleviate fuel poverty or fund additional community energy installations for example. [Community Energy South, a local support group and can provide guidance on community energy \(https://www.communityenergysouth.org/\)](https://www.communityenergysouth.org/).

[Battery storage \(#\)](#)

Community-scale batteries, like renewable energy, can provide a community benefit and return on investment, potentially at a more cost-effective scale than individual properties, although this is more complex.

[Community Energy South, a local support group and can provide guidance on community energy \(https://www.communityenergysouth.org/\)](https://www.communityenergysouth.org/).

Transport

[Go electric! \(#\)](#)

You could look to provide EV charging at community facilities on your land. If you're interested in finding out more [send a message to the Climate Change Team \(https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team).

Arrange demos or seminars on the benefits of switching to electric vehicles. Perhaps invite group members or local residents who have made the switch to share their experiences.

Lifestyle, consumption and waste

[Behavioural change \(#\)](#)

If you're looking to encourage a wider group or community, such as local neighbourhood, to take personal action to change behaviour then you could consider signing up to the [Greening Campaign \(http://www.greening-campaign.org/\)](http://www.greening-campaign.org/).

The natural environment

[Green roofs \(#\)](#)

Could you consider a green roof or wall in buildings you own or occupy? They can be a good way to absorb carbon and improve biodiversity.

[Read the hand DIY guide to green roofs \(https://greenrooftraining.com/\)](https://greenrooftraining.com/).

We'd love to hear from you

Do you have any other ideas that are currently missing from our toolkits? Or do you have any suggestions on how to make our toolkits easier to use? Perhaps you have some ideas on tackling climate change?

If so, get in touch, [send a message to the Climate Change Team](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team)
(<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/contact-the-climate-change-team>)

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